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February Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term February average:

Great Lakes Basin	115%
Lake Erie (including Lake St. Clair)	76%
Lake Superior	160%
Lakes Michigan-Huron	118%
Lake Ontario	78%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

LEVEL news

Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Water Levels

Volume 4, Number 3 **March 7, 1996**

Seasonal Rise in Levels Underway

Spring Flood Risk Low On Great Lakes

Water levels on the middle and lower Great Lakes are expected to rise in March, as is typical for this time of the year, but the risk of serious spring flooding remains low.

After a rapid rise during the mid-January thaw, Lake Ontario's level held almost steady in February and was about 19 cm above average at the end of the month. Lakes Michigan-Huron and Erie were generally 10 cm above average, and all were lower than the levels one year ago.

During March a small decline in the levels is expected on Lake Superior , which ended February 5 cm above average.

Water levels at the Port of Montreal remained well above chart datum due to increased flows from the Ottawa River and Lake Ontario. The harbour level is expected to remain well above chart datum in March.

Great Lakes Atlas Published

The third edition of The Great Lakes Environmental Atlas and Resource Book is now available for purchase. This 46 page colour atlas contains a wealth of information on the Great Lakes, their environment, and human activities within their basin. Much of the material from earlier editions has been updated to reflect current knowledge and emerging issues. There are chapters on natural processes, people and their activities, current concerns, joint management of the Great Lakes, and new directions for the Great Lakes community. Specific topics range from agriculture to zebra mussels. A combination of maps, diagrams, photos, tables and text is used to convey information in a very reader-friendly fashion.

The atlas is a joint product of the Government of Canada and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. It is available in English and French, for $19.95 per copy plus GST and shipping and handling of $3.50 for one to three copies, from our Burlington location listed in the "For More Information" box on the next page. Bulk prices are also available. If you wish to purchase a copy, please mail a cheque or money order payable to "The Receiver General for Canada" and specify the language desired. The atlas will also soon be accessible through the GLIMR homepage on the World Wide Web.

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Summary information for "LEVEL*news*"

St. Lawrence River Bulletin

In addition to preparing the forecast of water levels of the Great Lakes and Montreal Harbour used in the accompanying bulletin, Environment Canada also prepares water level forecasts for the upper St. Lawrence River. The forecasts are issued monthly during the boating season and cover six river sites from Kingston, Ontario to Pointe Claire, Quebec. If you wish to subscribe to this bulletin (for a fee of $10 per year), please contact our Cornwall office listed below.

Ice Breakup Begins

Ice cover on the middle and lower Great Lakes has started to dissipate. By the end of February much of the northern and central parts of Lake Huron and northern Georgian Bay had open water. This was also the case at the western end of Lake Erie and in Long Point Bay. Earlier this winter Lake Erie and Georgian Bay were completely ice covered, as was most of Lake Huron.

In Lake Ontario, ice was confined to the extreme eastern end and the Bay of Quinte by the end of February. At its peak, ice covered about one-quarter of the lake.

By contrast, Lake Superior was almost totally ice covered at the end of the month. Open water was confined to a small patch west of Michipicoten Island.

Open House

As mentioned last month, the International Niagara Board of Control will hold an Open House on Tuesday, March 19, 1996 beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Buffalo Hilton, 120 Church Street, Buffalo N.Y.

The purpose of this open house is to inform the public of the Board's current activities and to hear public comments and suggestions regarding the Board's work. In addition, information will be presented on a 1996-97 field demonstration of an improved design for the Lake Erie-Niagara River Ice Boom.

For more information contact Len Falkiner at (905) 336-4947.

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